

# A Closer look at Waste

## Water and Ocean Reflection Series

Photo: Kristin McDermott

### MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

'There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us... Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.'

Pope Francis, Laudato Si #211

### CONNECTIONS AT THE UN

Looking deeper into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), SDG 6 refers to the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The key concern for the quality of all our waterways and tributaries is the sustainable management of water and sanitation.

Four of the targets under this goal relate to freshwater management and give guidelines for participating Member States to consider in the creation of policies regarding water and sanitation. The danger is in not taking full action...

'We can see that Target 6.3 refers to wastewater treatment, which is part of the State's obligations in realizing the human right to sanitation for all. The human right to sanitation requires that waste must be safely disposed of and treated. Target 6.3 aims only to halve the proportion of untreated wastewater so it necessarily falls short of the obligation to guarantee the human right to adequate sanitation for all included in Target 6.2.'

(Amanda Lyons, (2017) *Water and Sanitation: A people's guide to SDG 6. A rights-based Approach to Implementation.* p8)

## TAKE ACTION

- STUDY 'WATER AND SANITATION: A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO SDG 6. A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION'. [\(LINK\)](#)
- THINK OF WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN ADDRESS THE AREAS WHERE THE TARGET GOALS FALL SHORT. ENCOURAGE YOUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR CONCERNS.



# Reflection



Take a walk along a drain, stream, river, estuary or beach....notice pollution and pick up rubbish.

Find out where your local town or city's sanitation treatment plant is. Does it have the capacity to treat the volume of human waste it has now?

What about into the future? Where does the "treated water" go? Does it have an affect on the environment? On the Ocean?

Those with septic tanks....when the tank is emptied...where does it go? How is it treated?

Extra: Explore the waste collection and sanitation methods of your closest port. Is it up to standard? Who monitors ship waste collections? Who monitors ships out at sea? Are there rules for or against disposal of waste at sea?

From your walk, draw or take pictures. Write a poem, short story or reflection on what you discover on your journey.



# Prayer

Doing the grocery shopping ...without thought.

Bright colours saying pick me pick me!

Rows of plastic containers in different sizes and colours, filled with all the goodies to make our life easy.

Fruit and Vegetable isle....lovely fruit waxed to perfection; vegetables with water spray mist going ....making everything fresh and desirable ...cut vegetables, cut fruit, wrapped in plastic to make out lives easy. Meat isle....various cuts of meat, wrapped in plastic and polystyrene to make our lives easy.

Hmm...the delicatessen ...I need to get some ready made pasta salads...making my life easy as they put it in the plastic container. Watching a documentary...seeing a turtle struggling to breathe with a plastic six can ring wrapped around it's neck. Not having life easy..

The women, having to purchase water, as the water from the tap, contaminated, a result of the fracking operation 10 km up the road...not having life easy.

## DID YOU KNOW?

'Due to population growth, accelerated urbanisation and economic development, the quantity of wastewater generated and its overall pollution load are increasing globally. However, wastewater management is being seriously neglected, and wastewater is grossly undervalued as a potentially affordable and sustainable source of water, energy, nutrients and other recoverable materials...

The costs of wastewater management are greatly outweighed by the benefits to human health, economic development and environmental sustainability – providing new business opportunities and creating more 'green' jobs.'

[http://www.worldwaterday.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact\\_sheet\\_WWD2017\\_EN.pdf](http://www.worldwaterday.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Fact_sheet_WWD2017_EN.pdf)